

Bentley PCC Meeting Thursday 17th September 2020 chaired by Yann Dubreuil via Zoom

Present: Yann Dubreuil, Christopher Ogilvie Thompson, Jill Kiely, Nick Caddick, Steve Fice, Jane Dalton, Marilyn Greenway, Malcolm Macnaghten, Deanne Ward, Ady Blizzard and Belinda Barfoot

Opening Prayer

Apologies: Hugh Chissell and Richard Myers

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the PCC meeting held on Thursday 16th January were approved although yet to be signed by Yann.

Matters Arising

Church Path and Lighting – Just a few aesthetic touches required to complete the path lighting. The new copper lanterns look striking. Steve and his team were thanked for all their hard work.

bMAP – Unfortunately, this has been upset by Covid19. Yann suggested prioritizing, exploring the best way forward for a single parish. After asking the Diocese for help Yann has received some flow charts which may be of assistance.

Current Guidelines (Updated Tuesday September 22nd)

The Government has emphasised that places of worship remain open. One significant change is that the maximum number able to attend a wedding will be reduced from 30 to 15 from Monday 28th September and the National Church, over the coming days, will continue to work with Government departments to update the guidance available to churches on other aspects of ongoing church life. Since the 4th of July 2020, the Government has allowed public worship to resume. New regulations came into force on 14th of September 2020 limiting gatherings to no more than six people. Places of worship, alongside other COVID-secure premises, are exempt, meaning that the number of people able to attend services depends on how many can safely be accommodated, observing appropriate physical distancing and hygiene measures. However, this exemption that covers places of worship making it possible for more than six people to gather for acts of communal worship is not a blanket exemption. People must not be part of a group of more than six unless they are from the same household or support bubble.

Steve reminded the PCC that the church hall is not COVID-secure so the rule of not more than 6 people applies.

Church open for private prayer

Few people are currently attending the church for private prayer. It was suggested that during October we should put a notice on the door with the phone numbers of the volunteers who can be contacted if someone wishes to attend for prayer. This will be reviewed at the end of October.

There have been visitors to the church on the Pilgrims Way walk who have requested the ink stamp to be able to document their pilgrimage. It was suggested leaving the ink stamp in the porch for this.

Bentley Primary School have asked if they can hold an assembly in the church once a month, one class at a time. The PCC agreed that the suitable time for this is when the church is currently open for private prayer on a Wednesday.

In December the school would like to hold a Nativity in the church with parents attending. In accordance with current COVID guidelines this will be possible and a video will be produced.

Holy Communion

Yann is keen for communion but as rules have tightened again this is not possible at this time.

Yann will try and bring communion into the video service.

Prayer for our care Homes

Our team are presently unable to go into the care homes as a few cases of Coronavirus have been reported. Yann encouraged prayer for the care homes at this time.

Finance Report for the month of July 2020

The audit of the 2019 PCC Accounts was delayed due to the pandemic but was eventually completed without any issues being raised. The audited accounts were distributed to the PCC by email on 31st July 2019. No questions or comments were received.

At the last ad-hoc PCC meeting in May, I presented the finance report for the first quarter of 2020. This report covers the year up to July 2020 as Sarah is still updating the accounting system for August.

Our income for the first seven months is down nearly £4,000 on the same period last year at £63,744 (2019: £67,703). Our general regular income is down by 10% (£5,159) at £43,398 (2019: £48,557). We have received a number of one-off donations in the period, but our exceptional income is substantially down on last year by almost £8,000. This is largely due to the car park appeal we had before the summer holidays in 2019. During the period when no services were taking place due to the closure of the church, we lost almost £3,450 in plate collections and one-off cash donations. However, on a more positive note, we received a restricted fund donation from Binsted PCC of £10,682 towards the costs of our Pastoral Assistants, Sam and Gemma Ball.

To date, our regular donors have remained as generous as ever, with only two cancelling their regular donations to us.

Looking at the recent weeks after this reporting period, we also received the Bentley Parish Council grant of £2,000 in August and this month £100 from Binsted Parish Council towards the magazine. We will also receive our first income this month from the Online Giving initiative, around £1,000. A donation of £1,000 is currently being processed by CAF and we received a further one-off donation of £1,000 in August. We will also be actioning a grant from the Bentley School Foundation Charity of almost £1,200 towards the historic costs of youth and junior church work.

Likewise, regular costs remain in line with budget over the period. We had exceptional costs of £3,250 for the church LED lighting upgrade work. There are four more lights to install inside the church, to light the wall behind the communion table in the chancel and the arch above the chancel steps. The path lighting work is also almost complete. In this period we have spent just under £1,000 for the oak lighting posts. We have yet to be invoiced for the digging of the trench and the removal of the stone path under the yew trees. The outside electrical installation work is now almost complete, with timer switches now at the bottom of the car park steps, the porch and the church hall. The post lights and new porch lights are now working and the three copper lantern lights will be installed tomorrow, two on the new posts and one on the church porch. The only remaining work is the re-siting and rewiring of the flood light on the church hall. The costs for all this work are already covered by the balance in the Church Hall Fund and the lighting donation received in 2018.

The magazine income remains lower than last year, largely due to late paying advertisers. As advised at the last meeting, due to the magazine being only online during lockdown, the outstanding payments have not been chased up yet, but this is now being progressed. The magazine deficit for the year stands at just over £1,700.

Looking at our overall position, you will be unsurprised to hear we are at a deficit of £10,000 when we exclude the magazine and the worship fund, which covers Sam and Gemma. However, please do bear in mind The Parish Council graveyard grant is late in being paid this year and we have spent almost

£5,000 on the lighting and the path, so the true 'business as usual' deficit is more realistically closer to £5,000, which is close to the same position as 2019 at this point in the year.

Quickly looking at our various funds, the general fund 2019 surplus was adjusted a little in the audit and stood at £1,527 at the end of 2019. Year to date, the general fund is running a deficit of £6,353, so adjusted for the carried forward surplus this means it stands at a deficit of £4,826.

The Fabric Fund has had the balance of the Church Hall fund transferred into it, so is only marginally lower than at the beginning of the year.

The Magazine surplus has been reduced due to the deficit and the Worship Fund has been significantly bolstered by the transfer from Binsted PCC and is at a surplus of just over £26,000.

Finally, Bentley's contribution to the Diocese Common Mission Fund is £66,063 in 2020 and it was expected to increase to £69,027 in 2021. Due to the pandemic, the Diocese have reduced their requests to the CMF so Bentley's 2021 request is now lower at £61,245, a reduction of £4,818 (7.3%) which equates to just over £400 per month.

Yann thanked Steve for his huge amount of work.

APCM Sunday 18th October after Morning Worship

This will be streamed, probably by Zoom, to make it as accessible as possible.

Belinda will post the required notices in the porch.

Malcolm agreed to stand for re-election. Yann and Marilyn requested others to join as Deanery Synod Representatives.

AOB

Lockable enclosure for the audio-visual equipment

Ady presented the images that Richard has drawn up. Everyone agreed it looked fantastic.

Next steps: If funds are available Ady suggested further drawings and working collaboratively with a local cabinet maker. **Nick** will work on obtaining a faculty.

A few suggestions for a cabinet maker were offered, these will be followed up.

Ady and **Nick** will advise the PCC when the next steps have been achieved.

Ady advised that the fader/mixer used for events eg. weddings needed replacement. He suggested it may be the appropriate time to look at the way we equip ourselves for the future, possibly with a digital system.

Weddings in 2021

With weddings being cancelled this year and rebooked for 2021 as well as other bookings, full capacity for weddings has been reached. Volunteers for the Services will be needed.

Yann wished to commend Steve and would like to formally commend him. He thanked Steve as Operations Director and taking a lead day-to-day. Thank you Steve.

Yann told the PCC how he has been struggling with fatigue. Having taken advice from the Diocese, Yann discussed with the PCC his wish to take an extended study leave/sabbatical from end of January 2021 until End of April 2021. A resolution from the benefice will be needed. Nick asked Yann to note the details, dates and the suggested cover for this time.

APCM Sunday 18th October 2020

Next PCC Meeting

Thursday 12th November 2020